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NO. 51
LABORATORY BULLETIN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES, HELENA, MONT

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David B. Lackman, Ph.D., Administrator

February 20, 1974

HEPATITIS - Communicable Disease Notes and Comments Nos. 3 and 4, 1974, deal with hepatitis. Specimens submitted to us for diagnostic purposes to determine whether Australian antigen is present (HB Ag) are forwarded to: K.R. Berquist, Ph.D., Chief, Virology Section, Center for Disease Control, 4402 North Seventh Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85014

Although Dr. Berquist may perform several tests (e.g. Counter electrophoresis, complement fixation, hemagglutination) for comparative purposes, the test he relies on for diagnostic information is Radioimmunoassay (RIA) and it is results of RIA which are reported to us. The latest information from Dr. Berquist is that one misses about 10 percent of the positives when sera are tested by counterelectrophoresis only.

Here are results of RIA on specimens submitted from Montana during 1973:
Number of specimens sent = 92; Positive in the RIA test for HBAG = 11 (12 percent)

This month, four out of six specimens from an institution in Montana were positive for Australia antigen (HBAG). Although fecal-oral transmission of hepatitis B is possible, spread by parenteral means is more likely. A 1972 case in California listed the source of infection as a human bite 4 1/2 months earlier.

SPECIMENS LOST IN THE MAIL - Please make certain that the screw caps of specimen containers are on straight and tightened before being placed in the mail. Occasionally we receive a container minus the contents and with the lid missing. Perhaps it would be best to secure the lid with tape.

REPORTING OF RESULTS OF RUBELLA HEMAGGLUTINATION-INHIBITION TESTS TO THE PATIENT - Here is an idea from a County Health Department. When the candidate has a blood specimen taken, the person writes name and address two weeks hence on a card. This is the reverse side of the card:

XYZ City-County Health Department

Date _____

Dear Mrs. ----- :

The blood we drew for your pre-marital examination was sent to the State Laboratory for testing to determine if you have had Rubella (German Measles).

_____ The test indicates you have had Rubella; therefore, you do not need to worry about having Rubella during pregnancy. No further action is required by you.

_____ The test indicates you have not had Rubella; therefore, you should consult your physician to see if Rubella Vaccine should be taken at this time to prevent Rubella during a future pregnancy.

ABC, M.D., M.P.H., Health Officer

For the month of January 1974, 91 percent of 1505 persons tested had evidence of past infection with Rubella. This has gone as high as 95 percent and as low as 90 percent.

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